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ART NEEDLEWORK

THE CREWEL WORK STITCHES.



LOOKING over our correspondence, received since the publication in the first number of this magazine of our elementary suggestions for the worker in crewels, we find several requests for special information on the subject. We therefore supplement our original remarks by the following suggestions, which embody answers to all the questions propounded to us by correspondents, and which we are sure will make the question of stitches quite intelligible to all.

The illustrations, Figs. 1, 2 and 3, make the crewel stitch so easy to understand, taken in connection with our remarks about it in the June number, that further description would be almost useless. We will simply add, therefore, that a single line of the crewel, or "tent" stitch, is like the wrong side of back-stitching in plain needlework, only the stitches are longer; that the worker must be careful that the stitches are neither too tight nor too loose, that the curves are not "broken-backed," and that the points are clear and sharp.

In working thickly filled-in embroidery, it is better not to outline the flower or leaf first, as their shape is not bounded by an outline in nature, and in this kind of work a more natural appearance is aimed at than in outline work. The stitches are to express the form of the leaf, and they should take the direction that the lines would take if we were shading the flower or leaf with a pen or pencil. For instance, in working a pansy, the stitches in each leaf must take the direction of the lines in Fig. 5. In a simple leaf the stitches should form the same angle with the middle rib that the lateral veins do in the real leaf. Leaves having parallel veins, such as the jonquil, should be worked in parallel stitches. In working the petals of flowers this rule cannot always be carried out, but it is often possible, and will be found to give great life and vigor to the work. The meeting of the stitches at the point of a snowdrop petal will express an important part of its construction in a perfectly simple and legitimate manner. It will be found that in the proper placing of stitches in the filling-in of flowers, and in the exercise of the judgment in all these particulars, the difference between skilled and 'prentice work, between the intelligent use of the needle and mere mechanical copying, will be evident.

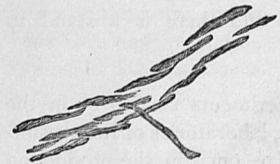


FIG. 2.—OUTLINE IN CREWEL-STITCH.

In working narrow leaves, where one stitch may reach from the middle to the edge of the leaf, it is best to pass the thread from the edge underneath to the middle, thus beginning each stitch in the middle and making the under side almost like the upper. The thread must not be pulled so tight as to pucker the work. A broad leaf or petal requires more than one stitch between the middle and the edge, and for these the needle may be brought up again whenever the next stitch seems wanted; but two stitches together should not begin nor end on the same line, except on the outside edge to preserve the outline, or in showing the middle rib.

Unless the embroidery be very large and bold, the line formed by the meeting of the stitches evenly down the middle of a leaf will sufficiently mark the mid-rib. If in the real leaf it be very deep and well-defined, a minute space left between the two lines, very narrow near the stalk and tapering till the threads meet again near the point, will in most cases be sufficient. As a

general rule, lateral veins need not be indicated at all; if they be very marked in the natural leaf, and either raised, or of a decidedly different color from the leaf itself, they may be laid on by applying a cord or piece of thick silk-twist and fastening it down with small stitches of fine silk of the same color. This way of marking the veins is only appropriate to large and rather coarse pieces of work; in fine work it is apt to attract the eye too much and to make the veins unduly prominent; in most cases the meeting of the stitches down the middle of the leaf is enough. If it be necessary to make the veins of another shade of color, and also to indicate the lateral veins, it is best to work the leaf first without regarding them, and to put them in afterward over the work, in the usual embroidery stitch of the desired shade.

As to the proper length of the embroidery stitch, it is obvious that no rule can be given; it depends both on the general style of the work, and on the shape and size of the flower or leaf. In the embroidered marks in the corners of old-fashioned blankets—always worthy of notice for their pattern—stitches of two or three inches long were used with good effect for the purpose, while in some fine embroidery, stitches two or three eighths of an inch long are the longest that can be found. For ordinary crewel embroidery the stitches may be from



FIG. 3.—OUTLINE OF LEAF IN CREWEL-STITCH.

three eighths to half an inch long, varied to suit their position, some being necessarily short; in silk work they will be rather shorter. It should be remembered that a long stitch gives ease and smoothness to the work, while a short one, though it may look painstaking, has an air of timidity that belongs rather to the work of the beginner than of the practised needlewoman.

Satin-stitch, worked over and under so that both sides are alike, hardly needs further mention; it is only a way of using the long-stitch for white work or for filled-in work, where the direction of the stitches has not to be considered.

Chain-stitch, which with the last-named was illustrated in the June number of THE ART AMATEUR, is sometimes used for filled-in embroidery; the lines of the chain are laid very close together, and follow the form of the leaf till it is filled in, beginning at the outside and working to the centre. Some Algerian and Eastern work is done entirely in this stitch; it is found frequently in ancient crewel-work; still it is not to be recommended; it has a slightly mechanical effect, and can be perfectly imitated with the sewing-machine; it is also less elastic and less easily adapted to varying forms than the long-stitch, which is the true embroidery-stitch. The chain-stitch is sometimes useful for outline work where a stronger line is required than that made by the long-stitch; it may be used very effectively in the horizontal lines as a base for single flowers to spring from, or for enclosing a narrow border.



FIG. 5.—EXAMPLE OF SHADING.

from the work, the needle being in the right hand; the thread in the left hand is twisted two or three times round the needle as close to the work as possible, then the point is turned down into the mate-

rial, nearly, but not exactly, where the thread came up; the needle is pulled through to the other side, and the thread drawn carefully till the knot is firm. Care must be taken to draw the thread round the needle close up to the work before the needle is pulled quite through, lest the knot should hang loose and the effect be spoiled.

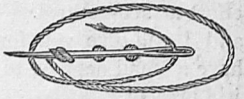


FIG. 6.—FRENCH KNOT.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER WORK.

A PRETTY carriage-apron may be made of sage-green momie-cloth, with a narrow border of shaded and light green leaves worked in crewels (wool) about three inches from the edge. The apron is lined with a deep maroon merino, and when thrown back looks exceedingly pretty. It has loops of dark green cord at each top corner of the apron to hook on to the "buttons" on the carriage. Serge for the material is often used for the purpose, and looks well. A border turned over of dark green or black leather is sometimes used, edged with narrow worsted braid. The apron is generally made of colors to correspond with the lining of the carriage; thus, one lined with blue would have a blue apron, or one to go with it, say dark brown or dark gray. Occasionally the apron is of the latter color, with a lining of the same shade as that of the carriage. Monograms are frequently worked in silks or wools at each lower corner of the apron, or else with silk braid of a darker color than that of the apron. A chocolate-brown apron had the monogram worked in orange-colored braid, and another, in navy-blue, was embroidered in white.

A couch rug may be made with stripes of colored ribbon velvet, about four inches wide, and alternate stripes of momie cloth. The stripes of momie cloth should have an easy running pattern traced on, which is worked in either chain or common cross-stitch, in colored Berlin wool, down the centre. The work is quick and pleasant, and very effective. The stripes should be joined by a chain-stitch row, in gold-colored filling silk. Ruby, or a rich blue, velvet ribbon is particularly pretty, with the pattern on the cloth worked in pink or pale blue. Coarse lace, the color of the cloth, is best for an edging; and if the worker likes she could use up the remains of the wool by running it in and out of the pattern of the coarse lace, like Russian lace. It has also a good effect to work the whole in gold-colored filling silk.

OUR SUPPLEMENT.

PLATE I. is a design for a Plaque. With the addition of the wreath, it will be very suitable for a sofa cushion or foot-stool, the design to be worked in crewels.

Plate II. gives a design intended for a foot-stool cover or a pillow-sham. But it can be used for a variety of purposes. The space in the centre is left for a monogram. The corner pieces will be found useful in many ways.

Plate III. needs no explanation. It consists of a number of easy designs for borders, which may be worked in crewel-work or braid. The patterns are drawn on ruled paper for the convenience of school-children and others.

The Princess Lace, of which two beautiful patterns are given in Plate IV. of our supplement, is composed of tape, braid, and linen thread. The work is basted on enameled leather, and the parts are caught together with lace stitch. Buttonhole stitch is used for the work. The pattern may be either stamped on the leather or on the linen.

The design at the foot of the same page shows an appropriate style of repeat ornament for broad borders or bands.

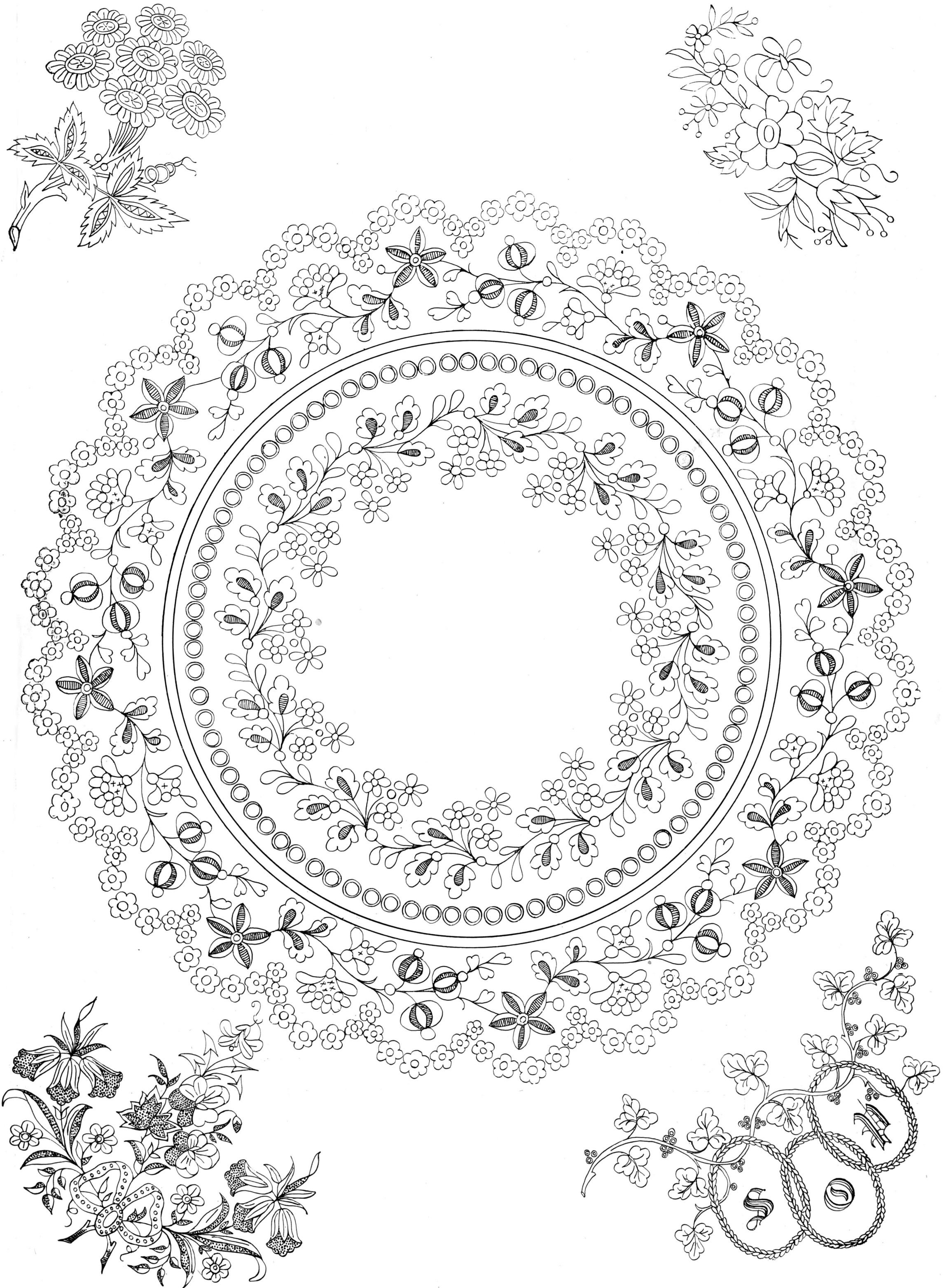
SEVERAL articles related to the subject of this department will be found under the head of "Decoration and Furniture."

PLATE I.

[See Page 18, No. 1.]



DESIGN FOR A PLAQUE; OR, WITH WREATH, FOR SOFA CUSHION OR FOOTSTOOL.



DESIGN IN CREWEL WORK FOR FOOTSTOOL COVER OR PILLOW-SHAM; AND VARIOUS CORNER-PIECES.

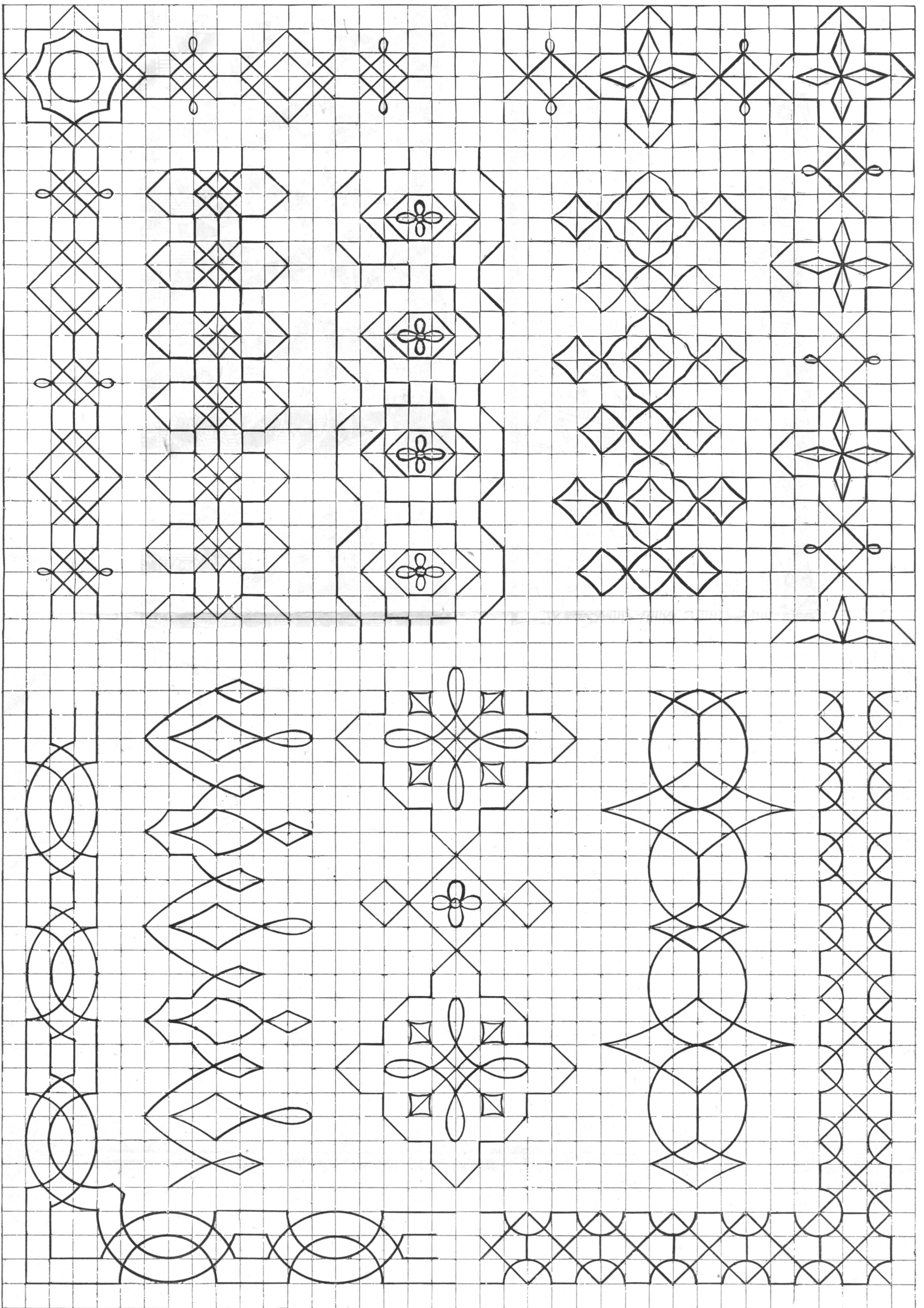
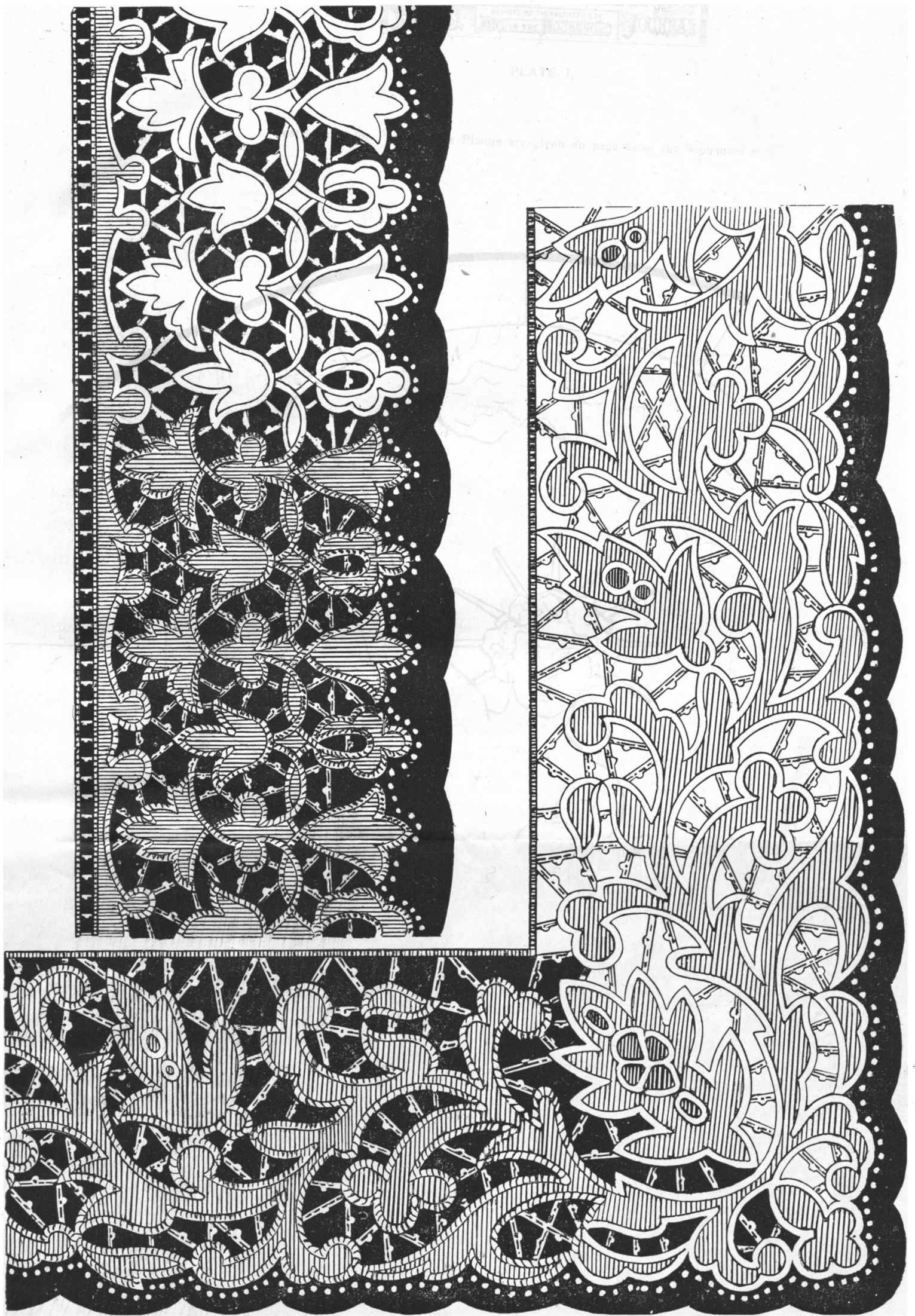
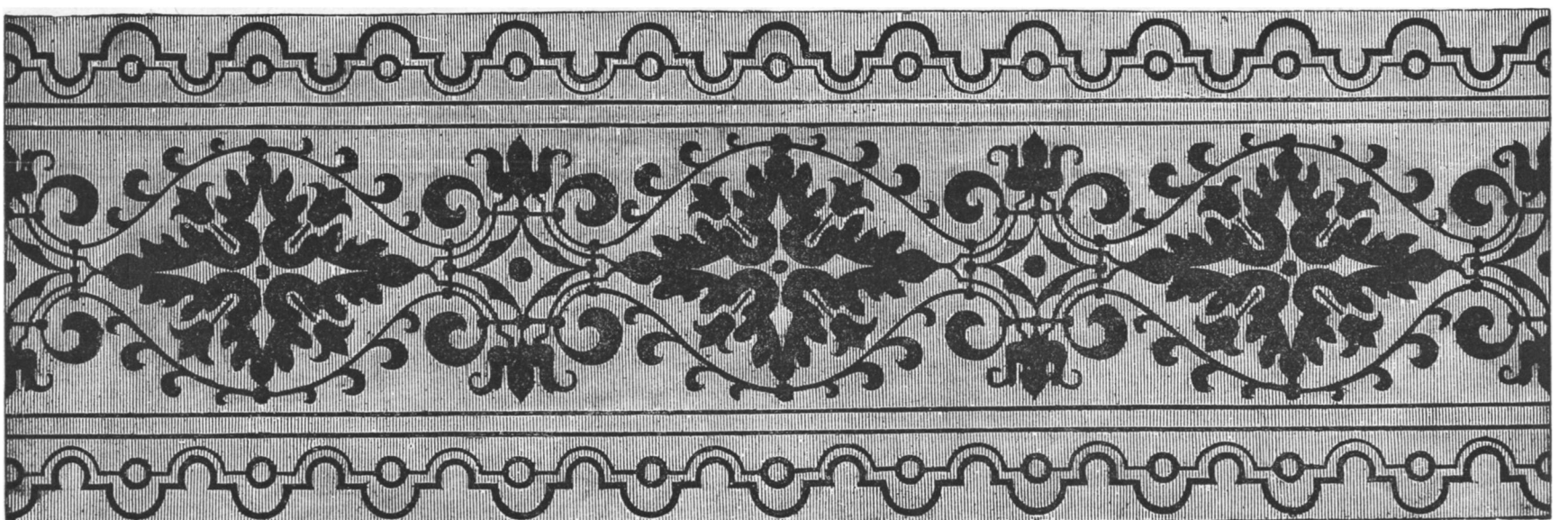


PLATE IV.



DESIGNS FOR MAKING PRINCESSE LACE.

[See Page 62.]



ORNAMENTAL BORDER FOR EMBROIDERY OR PAINTING ON WOOD.